

**Remarks/Arguments:**

This voluntary amendment follows a Request for Continued Examination, which followed a final rejection mailed March 24, 2003.

We propose to amend the drawings as shown on the attachment, and also to amend pages 9 - 11 of the specification (also attached) to correct two clerical errors.

In the office action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 3 to 5 as being unpatentable over Bodapati *et al.* (US-6065885) in view of Herring *et al.* (US-6065883). The rejected claims are being cancelled and replaced by new claims 10 to 14.

The claimed invention is now directed to the printing of advertising slogans on memory cards, such as smartcards, which store the advertising slogans, where an advertising slogan stored in a memory card is stored in a memory of the postage meter and the advertising slogan is printed from the memory of the postage meter.

Such a method is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited documents.

Bodapati *et al.* discloses nothing more than a carrier which enables printing on “small” items, specifically printable card stock, by a printer.

Herring *et al.* discloses only a postage meter which includes a printer having a print head and first and second feeding means which are spaced in the feeding direction and provide for the feeding of mail pieces past the print head.

Neither Bodapati *et al.* nor Herring *et al.* discloses or suggests the printing of memory cards; they certainly make no disclosure or suggestion as to the downloading of an advertising slogan from a memory card to a memory of a postage meter and the printing of that advertising slogan onto the memory card from the memory of the postage meter.

The Examiner had observed that "...the use of a memory card which contains data for printing on the card is well known in the art." It is acknowledged that memory cards have been used to store advertising slogans, but no prior art has been identified which suggests the use of a postage meter in the manner now claimed. In particular, neither reference discloses the method steps of claim 10: (a) providing a carrier for the memory card, the carrier having a length at least equal to the distance between the first and second locations; (b) mounting the memory card to the carrier; (c) feeding the memory card while mounted in the carrier to and past the print head by utilizing the first and second feeding means to concurrently feed the carrier, whereby the memory card is fed by the first feeding means at least until the carrier is fed by the second feeding means; and (d) printing an imprint of the advertising slogan from the memory of the postage meter on the memory card.

The dependent claims contain additional limitations which, together with the limitations of claim 10, would make them patentable even if claim 10 were not.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the invention as now claimed is clearly distinguished over the disclosures of Bodapati *et al* and Herring *et al* when taken in combination.

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print on a smartcard 32 having a length y, a carrier is provided for the smartcard as shown in Figure 3. The carrier comprises a thin sheet 33 having a recess 34 therein. The recess 34 has dimensions to receive the smartcard 32 such that an exposed surface of the smartcard that is to receive an imprint is approximately level with a surface of the sheet. For purposes of illustration, in Figure 3 the smartcard is shown as being smaller than the recess 34. However it will be appreciated that the recess is of such dimensions that the smartcard is received therein with a snug fit so that the smartcard is so held in the recess that the smartcard is not able to move to any significant extent relative to the carrier. The sheet has a dimension X sufficiently large and greater than Y that when the carrier is entered into the nip of the input rollers 14, 15 with the edge 35 of the carrier leading, the edge 35 will reach and be engaged by the impression roller for feeding the smartcard, carried by the carrier, in printing engagement with the ink ribbon 21 past the print head 17 before a trailing edge 36 of the carrier leaves the nip between the input rollers. Accordingly the carrier continues to be fed by the input rollers until after the carrier is engaged by the impression roller and hence after being entered into the nip between the input rollers, the smartcard carried in the carrier is positively driven by the pair of input rollers 14, 15, the pair of input rollers and the impression roller 19 or the impression roller until printing of the imprint of the slogan is completed.

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The recess 34 is located a predetermined distance from the leading edge 35 so that after sensing of the leading edge 35 of the carrier by sensing means (not shown) of the postage meter, commencement of printing is timed such that the slogan is printed across the exposed surface of the smartcard. Postage meters are controlled so as to print a postage indicium at a predetermined location

relative to a right edge and an upper edge of a mail piece and to print an advertising slogan at the left hand side of and adjacent to the postage indicium. Accordingly if desired the carrier may be constructed to locate the  
5 smartcard relative to the right hand edge [[33]] 35 and an upper edge [[35]] 37 of the carrier in a location corresponding to the location in which an advertising slogan would be printed on a mail piece.

10 While the carrier is described hereinbefore as being a sheet having recess therein, it may be formed as a two layer structure, a first layer being continuous and the second having an aperture of size corresponding to the required recess and the second layer overlying and being bonded to  
15 the first layer. It will be understood that the carrier has a thickness similar to mail pieces so that it may be fed between the input rollers 14, 15, between the impression roller [[91]] 19 and the print head 17 and between the ejection rollers 29, 30.

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Hereinbefore, the item to which the imprint is to be applied has been described as a smartcard. It is to be understood that other items, for example memory cards of similar dimensions to smartcards and items which do not include  
25 electronic circuits may also be printed on in the same manner using a carrier therefor. Items having relatively small dimensions are difficult to handle and to maintain in alignment in a printer and the provision of a carrier of larger dimensions facilitates handling of the item and  
30 printing thereon.

It will be appreciated that the surface of the smartcard or memory card on which the imprint is to be applied is a surface of a synthetic plastics substance instead of paper  
35 forming a mail piece. Consequently the conditions required for producing a required quality of imprint may be different from those required for producing an imprint on mail pieces.

Therefore it may be necessary to use a thermal transfer ink ribbon having a characteristic different from ribbons used for printing on mail pieces and it may be necessary to increase the power applied to the thermal printing elements  
5 of the print head as compared with the power required to print on mail pieces. It has been found that utilizing a thermal transfer printing process, a strong bond is obtained between the ink and the surface of the smartcard and hence the imprint on the smartcard is not easily damaged or worn  
10 away. However if desired other forms of printing, for example inkjet, may be used.

As described hereinbefore, it is desired to make use of the printing means in commercially available postage meters to  
15 print on the items such as smartcards. Recently developed postage meters use ink jet print heads and in some of these postage meters the mail pieces are located manually and are not fed through the postage meter. The mail piece is located in a required position in engagement with guides and  
20 the print head is traversed across the mail piece. If desired postage meters constructed to operate and be used in this manner may be used to print on relatively small items such as smartcards by utilizing a carrier to locate the item in a required location relative to the guides to  
25 ensure printing of the advertising slogan in the required position. In addition to advertising slogans, the smartcards or memory cards may be used to input other data into postage meters and the printing means may be utilized to print information indicating the data stored in the card.

2/2

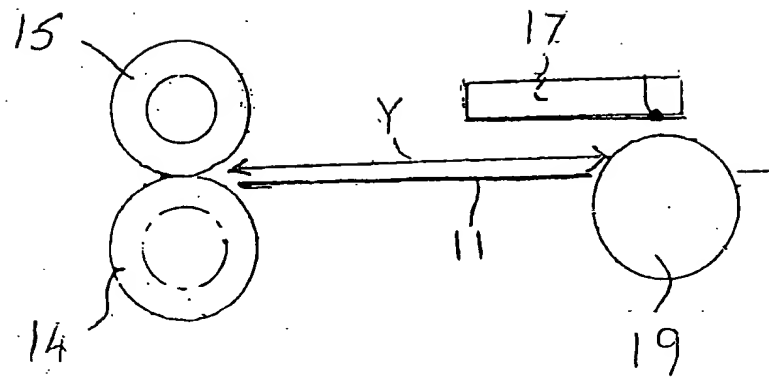


Fig 2

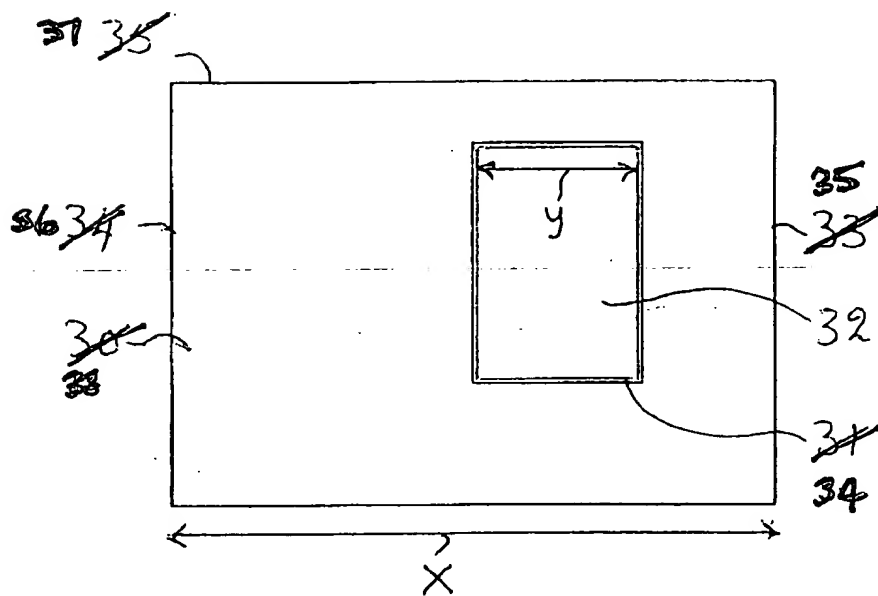


Fig 3